



# ***Bob Corker's Policy Points***

*Compiled by the Legislative Team of U.S. Senator Bob Corker*



## **IMPROVING HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA**

*Senator Bob Corker strongly believes that no issue requires an innovative cure more than our country's ailing health care system. Today, nearly 47 million Americans, including 800,000 Tennesseans, lack adequate health insurance to protect themselves and their families. Senator Corker believes that all Americans deserve to have access to high-quality private health insurance coverage that is both affordable and transferrable between jobs.*

- ✓ **Transforming Health Care:** Senator Corker has joined Senate colleagues in authoring the Every American Insured Health Act, a bill to provide all individuals access to health insurance that is both affordable and portable, and deeply rooted in the private market. Senator Corker is also a cosponsor of a bipartisan proposal that provides Americans with tax incentives to purchase health insurance, encourages states to reform medical liability laws, and strengthens the focus on wellness and preventative care rather than insuring people only when they are sick. Senator Corker believes both of these proposals provide a great starting point for Congress to pass meaningful health care reform in the near future. Today, nearly 47 million Americans, including 800,000 Tennesseans, lack adequate health insurance coverage.
- ✓ **Expanding Health Care Access:** Senator Corker secured additional federal funding for Tennessee hospitals in S. 2499, a Medicare reform bill that was recently signed into law. This key provision will provide additional federal assistance to safety net hospitals that provide a disproportionate share of uncompensated care. Senator Corker also cosponsored an amendment that would expand access to obstetrics care in rural areas. In various states like Tennessee, OB/GYNs are leaving their practices due to the extraordinarily high cost of medical malpractice insurance. More than 30 of Tennessee's 95 counties have inadequate access to obstetrical care and 19 counties have no obstetrical access at all. The amendment would place caps on non-economic damages for OB/GYNs facing lawsuits in rural counties across the country and help to lower the cost of medical malpractice insurance.
- ✓ **Making Health Insurance More Affordable:** Senator Corker is a sponsor of a bill that will empower Americans to purchase affordable health insurance policies sold nationwide by using the Internet and other means. Currently, individuals are forced to purchase only the health plans available in their state, even if a neighboring state has more affordable and flexible plans. The Health Care Choice Act, S. 2477, would remove this barrier and allow individuals and families who reside in one state to buy a more affordable health insurance plan sold in another state. This would allow consumers the opportunity to tailor their insurance benefits to their individual needs.
- ✓ **Ensuring Health Care for Children:** Senator Corker voted to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) because he feels it is a successful and meaningful program which provides over 6 million low-income children across America with health insurance. Tennessee's SCHIP program, CoverKids, currently insures over 17,000 children. An estimated 127,000 children will be eligible for the program. Senator Corker also supports broader health care reforms, such as his "Every American Insured Health Act," that provides a comprehensive solution to give all Americans access to health insurance.



"We need to move beyond solutions that only nibble at the edges of a much larger crisis facing our country: the nearly 47 million Americans that lack basic health insurance. This Congress owes the American public our attention to a crisis that is affecting so many individuals and their families. I believe this is our moral obligation."

- U.S. Senator Bob Corker

- ✓ **Equality for Mental Health:** Senator Corker cosponsored S. 558, the Mental Health Parity Act, which successfully passed the Senate in September 2007. This bill addresses the necessity for mental health to be treated the same as any other medical need. This bill would require insurance policies to provide the same level of mental health benefits as all other medical needs covered. Over 300,000 Tennesseans, and millions more Americans nationwide, are affected by mental illness.
- ✓ **Strengthening the Healthcare Safety Net:** Senator Corker opposed a proposal that would have limited payments to Tennessee's safety net hospitals that provide a majority of care to low-income and uninsured populations. Senator Corker also supported a one-year moratorium on the proposal that successfully passed into law. If enacted, the proposal would have cost Tennessee's health centers an estimated \$1.3 billion over five years and caused 19 of them to operate at a loss.
- ✓ **Preserving Access for Seniors:** Senator Corker supported measures to preserve Medicare beneficiaries' access to inpatient rehabilitation hospitals by cosponsoring S. 543. This bill was successfully incorporated into S. 2499 that passed the Senate and has become law. This bill revises a regulation to ensure that Medicare patients who meet the need for intense rehabilitation, regardless of specific condition, are able to access care at such facilities instead of turning to alternative and less appropriate care settings. In Tennessee, there are 32 inpatient rehabilitation hospitals.
- ✓ **Support for Breast Cancer Research:** Senator Corker has cosponsored two bills to provide support for breast cancer research. The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act, S. 624, continues funding for a program that has been very successful in providing screening and treatment services for low-income and minority women. The second bill, S. 597, continues the sale of a special stamp that raises money for breast cancer research. S. 597 successfully passed the Senate and has become law.
- ✓ **Expanding Suicide Prevention:** Senator Corker supported a measure to provide \$40 million in 2008 for suicide prevention services, awareness, research, and technical assistance. This funding request was passed by the Senate and has become law.
- ✓ **Working to End Polio:** Senator Corker supported funding for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Additional funding is intended to be used by the federal agencies to offer immunization support in both Asia and Africa where polio is still a threat. To date, tremendous progress has been made to eradicate polio and only four countries are known to have reported polio cases. This funding request was passed by the Senate and has become law.
- ✓ **Investing in Pediatric Health:** Senator Corker supported efforts to fully fund a program that ensures pediatric hospitals can continue to train new pediatric specialists. The program benefits several children's hospitals in Tennessee, including East Tennessee Children's Hospital and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. This funding request was passed by the Senate and has become law.
- ✓ **Expanding Cancer Research:** Senator Corker supported efforts to increase research funding for the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the federal research body that aims to discover and develop new treatments for cancer. This funding request was passed by the Senate and has become law.